

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Water Resources Division
Water Rights Bureau

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For Routine Actions with Limited Environmental Impact

Part I. Proposed Action Description

1. *Applicant/Contact name and address:* Norman & Debra Rocksund, 30833 Witty Lane, Columbia Falls MT 59912
2. *Type of action:* Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit 30027511-76LJ
3. *Water source name:* Unnamed Tributary of Garnier Creek
4. *Location affected by action:* SE of section 19, T 31N, R 20W, Flathead County
5. *Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:*
The DNRC shall issue a water use permit if an applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-311, MCA are met. This application is to obtain a water use permit for an unnamed tributary of Garnier Creek. The applicant proposes to install an infiltration gallery along side the stream to collect water for his new home. Water will be pumped from the stilling well at a rate of 10 gpm or less. A maximum of 1.63 acre-feet will be diverted annually for domestic and lawn & garden watering uses.
6. *Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:*
(include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction) MT DEQ, MT FW &P, Natural Heritage Program and the MT Historical Society.

Part II. Environmental Review

1. Environmental Impact Checklist:

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

WATER QUANTITY, QUALITY AND DISTRIBUTION

Water quantity - Assess whether the source of supply is identified as a chronically or periodically dewatered stream by DFWP. Assess whether the proposed use will worsen the already dewatered condition.

Determination: No impact. The source is so small it is not recognized by either the DFWP or the USGS on any map or database.

Water quality - Assess whether the stream is listed as water quality impaired or threatened by DEQ, and whether the proposed project will affect water quality.

Determination: No impact. This is not a listed source.

Groundwater - Assess if the proposed project impacts ground water quality or supply. If this is a groundwater appropriation, assess if it could impact adjacent surface water flows.

Determination: No impact

DIVERSION WORKS - Assess whether the means of diversion, construction and operation of the appropriation works of the proposed project will impact any of the following: channel impacts, flow modifications, barriers, riparian areas, dams, well construction.

Determination: The diversion works have already been installed by a prior owner of the property.

UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Endangered and threatened species - Assess whether the proposed project will impact any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants or aquatic species or any "species of special concern," or create a barrier to the migration or movement of fish or wildlife. For groundwater, assess whether the proposed project, including impacts on adjacent surface flows, would impact any threatened or endangered species or "species of special concern."

Determination: Grizzly bears and Canadian Lynx pass through this area from time to time. However, neither the diversion works, conveyance pipeline nor the new home create any type of migration barrier which could impact these or other species of special concern.

Wetlands - Consult and assess whether the apparent wetland is a functional wetland (according to COE definitions), and whether the wetland resource would be impacted.

Determination: Not applicable

Ponds - For ponds, consult and assess whether existing wildlife, waterfowl, or fisheries resources would be impacted.

Determination: Not applicable

GEOLOGY/SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE - Assess whether there will be degradation of soil quality, alteration of soil stability, or moisture content. Assess whether the soils are heavy in salts that could cause saline seep.

Determination: No impacts

VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY/NOXIOUS WEEDS - Assess impacts to existing vegetative cover. Assess whether the proposed project would result in the establishment or spread of noxious weeds.

Determination: Preventing the spread of noxious weeds will be the responsibility of the applicant.

AIR QUALITY - Assess whether there will be a deterioration of air quality or adverse effects on vegetation due to increased air pollutants.

Determination: No impacts

HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES - Assess whether there will be degradation of unique archeological or historical sites in the vicinity of the proposed project.

Determination: No historical sites were identified on the property.

DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AND ENERGY - Assess any other impacts on environmental resources of land, water, and energy not already addressed.

Determination: None identified.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS - Assess whether the proposed project is inconsistent with any locally adopted environmental plans and goals.

Determination: This project is consistent with others in the area.

ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES - Assess whether the proposed project will impact access to or the quality of recreational and wilderness activities.

Determination: No impacts

HUMAN HEALTH - Assess whether the proposed project impacts on human health.

Determination: No impacts

PRIVATE PROPERTY - Assess whether there are any government regulatory impacts on private property rights.

Yes___ No_X_. If yes, analyze any alternatives considered that could reduce, minimize, or eliminate the regulation of private property rights.

Determination:

OTHER HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES - For routine actions of limited environmental impact, the following may be addressed in a checklist fashion.

Impacts on:

- (a) Cultural uniqueness and diversity? None
 - (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? Slight increase in tax revenues when the home is completed.
 - (c) Existing land uses? Slight changes only.
 - (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? None
 - (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? No changes since the home has been built for several years.
 - (f) Demands for government services? Slight increase
 - (g) Industrial and commercial activity? None
 - (h) Utilities? Slight increase in demand.
 - (i) Transportation? None
 - (j) Safety? None
 - (k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances? None identified.
2. ***Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population:*** No secondary or cumulative impacts were identified in this EA as the result of this action.
3. ***Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:*** None are needed at this time.
4. ***Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative, if an alternative is reasonably available and prudent to consider:*** The no action alternative would force the applicant to drill a well, which may be unsuccessful and very expensive, or haul water which would waste more fossil fuels or prevent the applicants from having water in the home for domestic uses.

PART III. Conclusion

Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? NO

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action: Because no significant or cumulative impacts were identified as a result of this action, the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for the action.

Name of person responsible for preparation of EA:

Name: Wes McAlpin

Title: Water Resources Specialist

Date: June 19, 2007